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The 1986 Survey of Dental Practice

Dentists in Nonsolo and Solo Practice

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DENTISTS IN NONSOLO AND SOLO PRACTICE

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HIGHLIGHTS

* The average number of hours per week a dentist spent in his office showed virtually no differnce between solo and nonsolo dentists; 42.1 hours for nonsolo dentists, 42.5 hours for solo dentists. Similarly, the average number of hours a dentist spent per week treating patients showed little difference, with nonsolo dentists reporting an average of 32.9 hours compared to 32.8 for solo dentists.

* Nonsolo and solo dentists reported similar percentages of their time in the office treating patients. Nonsolo dentists spent 78.1% of their time in the office treating patients, compared to 77.2% for solo dentists. For general practitioners the percentages were 78.4% for nonsolo dentists, 77.7 for solo dentists. Specialists reported 75.5% and 75.4% for nonsolo and solo dentists respectively.

* The average age of solo dentists was 2.5 years higher than that of nonsolo dentists; 47.4 and 44.9 years respectively. This difference was consistent within gender also, with solo male dentists' average age 2.2 years greater than nonsolo males, and solo females age 3.8 years greater than their nonsolo counterparts.

* The average number of patient visits per week (excluding hygienist visits) was similar for nonsolo and solo dentists; 64.4 and 62.5 respectively. No difference occurs when hygienist visits are included, with nonsolo dentists having and average of 78.1 patient visits per week compared to 78.0 for solo dentists.

* Nonsolo dentists treated an average of 1.8 patients per hours, while solo dentists treated 1.7. Among general practitioners, the figure was 1.6 for both nonsolo and solo dentists. Among specialists, solo dentists treated slightly more patients per hour than did their nonsolo counterparts, 2.8 vs. 2.6.

* As expected, substantial differences occur between nonsolo and solo dentists in the total number of personnel employed. Over three-quarters (79.4%) of the nonsolo dentists reported having four or more (full- or part-time) employees, compared to 52.6% for solo dentists.

The greatest difference in the number of personnel employed occurred among specialists; 86.2% of nonsolo specialists reported having 4 or more employees in their practice, compared to 69.5% for solo specialists.

* Nearly half (44%) of the solo dentists did not employ full- or part-time dental hygienists, compared to 30.4% for all nonsolo dentists. The percentages decline markedly regarding full- or part-time chairside assistants with 10% of solo dentists and only 3% of nonsolo dentists reporting no chairside assistants employed.

* Nonsolo dentists tend to employ more personnel than solo dentists. The following tables illustrates this for employment of hygienists and chairside assistants.

Percent of Nonsolo and Solo Dentists Employing One or More Hygienist and Chairside Assistant, 1985

	General Practitioner	Specialist	All
	Percent Employing Hygienists		
Nonsolo	77.1%	33.5%	69.6%
Solo	61.5	25.6	56.0
	Percent Employing Hygienists		
Nonsolo	96.9%	97.4%	97.0%
Solo	89.0	95.8	90.0

Source: American Dental Association, 1986 Survey of Dental Practice.

* The mean net income generated form private practice was $76,273 for all nonsolo dentists. Nonsolo general practitioners reported a mean of $69,499, whereas specialists reported a mean of $112,446. In comparison, the mean net income generated from private practice was $65,756 for all solo dentists. Solo general practitioners reported a mean of $60,629, and solo specialists a mean of $98,811.

* Both nonsolo and solo dentists had total practice expense equivalent to almost 60% of their practice gross incomes. The table below presents a summary of the ratio of total practice expenses to total practice gross income.

Practice Expenses as a Percentage of Gross Income for Nonsolo and Solo Dentists , 1985

	General Practitioner	Specialist	All
Nonsolo	59.5%	54.4%	58.8%
Solo	59.4	57.5	59.0

Source: American Dental Association, 1986 Survey of Dental Practice.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides descriptive statistics from the 1986 Survey of Dental Practice on nonsolo and solo private practitioners in the United States for the year 1985. Some of the areas covered are the dentists' practice status, characteristics of patients, employment of auxiliary personnel, and income and expenditures.

Tables are presented separately for nonsolo and solo dentists. Each section is preceded by a brief summary citing statistics on all responding dentists in a category. The tables present detailed data broken down by general practitioner and specialist status for each of the two categories.

The sample used in this survey was a sample of dentists and NOT a sample of dental practices. Responses were obtained from the individual dentists, not the practice as a whole.

Some data were not exhaustively collected from all dentists in a nonsolo practice, which prohibits answers to some questions. For example, the average dentist age per practice is not available since age for each dentist in the practice was not collected; only the age of the respondent dentist is available.

Nonsolo Dentists

Shareholder in an incorporated practice is the predominant form of ownership among nonsolo dentists. Of all nonsolo dentists surveyed, 35.6% were shareholders in an incorporated practice. Nonsolo general practitoners reported 33.5% and nonsolo specialists, 55.6%. Nonsolo general practitioners exhibited a greater tendency towards being sole proprietors than did specialists, with 26.7% citing sole proprietorship as their current employment status, compared to 11.7% for nonsolo specialists.

The majority (50%) of patients seen by all nonsolo dentists had annual family incomes between $10,000 and $29,999. Nonsolo general practitioners estimated that an average of 51.3% of their patients had family incomes in this range, with specialists reporting an average of 43.3%.

Nonsolo specialists estimated a slightly higher percentage of pateints with family incomes in excess of $30,000 than did general practitioners, 49.1% and 38.2% respectively.

Approximately 61.7% of the patients seen by all nonsolo dentists were covered by private insurance programs. The percentages were fairly constant across nonsolo general practitoners and specialists.

All nonsolo dentists had an average of 64.4 patient visits per week (excluding hygienist visits). Nonsolo specialists had a significantly greater average number, 94.4, whereas nonsolo general practitioners reported an average of 58.6.

All nonsolo dentists treated an average of 1.8 patients per hour. Nonsolo specialists reported a slightly higher average, 2.6 patients per hour, with nonsolo general practitioners reporting and average of 1.6.

Over three-quarters (79.4%) of all nonsolo dentists employ 4 or more employees. The percentage declines slightly to 78% for nonsolo general practitioners but jumps to 86.2% for nonsolo specialists.

The average net income derived from private practice was $76,273 for all nonsolo dentists. Nonsolo general practitioners reported an average of $69,499, while nonsolo specialists reported a significantly higher average of $112,446.

Nonsolo Dentists (continued)

All nonsolo dentists earned an average of 2.8% of their total (net income from practice plus income from other dental sources) from other dental sources. The percentages were fairly constant across nonsolo general practitioners and specialists.

Slightly under half (46.5%) of all nonsolo dentists' gross income was paid by direct patient payment. Nonsolo general practitioners reported an average of 45.6% compared to specialists' 50.9%.

Total practice expenses for all nonsolo dentists averaged $270,898. Of this, 34.7% was accounted for by wage payments, 15% by laboratory charges, and 10.9% by purchases of dental supplies. Total practice expenses averaged $264,567 for nonsolo general practitioners and $302,575 for specialists.

All nonsolo dentists reported an average annual gross income of $460,932. Gross income for nonsolo specialists was substantially higher, $555,829, and lower for nonsolo general practitioners, $441,948. Gross income per dentist in a nonsolo practice averaged $153,393 among all nonsolo dentists, with $143,009 for nonsolo general practitioners and $205,300 for nonsolo specialists.

Of all nonsolo dentists, 45.5% reported employing one full- or part-time dentist. Almost half (46.5%) of nonsolo general practitioners employed one full- or part-time dentist, with the percentage declining to 35.7% for nonsolo specialists. Almost half (48.5% of nonsolo specialists reported employing no full- or part-time dentists.

NONSOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME PERSONNEL

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES						
NO EMPLOYEES	0	0	1	1.1	1	0.2
1 EMPLOYEE	11	2.1	1	1.1	13	1.9
2 EMPLOYEES	40	7.3	3	2.7	43	6.5
3 EMPLOYEES	68	12.6	10	9.0	78	12.0
4 OR MORE EMPLOYEES	426	78.0	95	86.2	521	79.4
ALL	545	100.0	111	100.0	656	100.0

NONSOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME ASSISTANTS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
FULL- OR PART-TIME ASSISTANTS						
NO ASSISTANTS	17	3.1	3	2.6	20	3.0
1 ASSISTANT	112	20.3	12	10.4	124	18.6
2 ASSISTANTS	160	29.0	22	19.3	181	27.3
3 ASSISTANTS	120	21.7	18	16.1	138	20.8
4 OR MORE ASSISTANTS	143	25.9	58	51.6	201	30.2
ALL	551	100.0	113	100.0	664	100.0

NONSOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME HYGIENISTS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
NUMBER OF HYGIENISTS						
NO HYGIENISTS	127	22.9	76	66.5	203	30.4
1 HYGIENIST	180	32.6	14	11.9	194	29.1
2 HYGIENISTS	126	22.7	9	8.2	135	20.2
3 HYGIENISTS	60	11.0	4	3.6	65	9.7
4 OR MORE HYGIENISTS	59	10.7	11	9.8	71	10.6
ALL	552	100.0	114	100.0	666	100.0

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

NONSOLO DENTISTS
NET INCOME FROM PRIVATE PRACTICE AND OTHER DENTAL SOURCES

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL - WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	N
NET INCOME FROM PRIVATE PRACTICE	$69,499	446	$112,446	162	$76,273	608
NET INCOME FROM ALL DENTAL SOURCES	$71,403	446	$116,372	162	$78,496	608

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF GROSS INCOME PAID BY

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL - WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	N
DIRECT PATIENT PAYMENT	45.6	390	50.9	160	46.5	550
GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS	6.1	390	5.6	160	6.0	550
PRIVATE INSURANCE	47.0	390	42.4	160	46.2	550

NONSOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS CURRENTLY PRACTICING AS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT						
SOLE PROPRIETOR	174	26.7	8	11.7	182	25.3
PARTNER	135	20.8	17	24.5	152	21.1
SHAREHOLDER, INCORPORATED	219	33.5	38	55.6	256	35.6
EMPLOYED - INCORPORATED PRACTICE	59	9.0	4	5.6	62	8.7
EMPLOYED - UNINCORPORATED PRACTICE	25	3.8	0	0	25	3.4
INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR	40	6.2	2	2.6	42	5.8
ALL	652	100.0	68	100.0	720	100.0

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WHO ARE

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
LESS THAN 15 YEARS	18.7	460	30.3	179	20.6	639
15-65 YEARS	64.5	460	58.1	179	63.4	639
65 AND OLDER	16.8	460	11.6	179	15.9	639

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WITH ESTIMATED INCOMES OF

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
UNDER $10,000	10.5	446	7.6	161	10.1	607
$10,000-29,999	51.3	446	43.3	161	50.0	607
$30,000 PLUS	38.2	446	49.1	161	39.9	607

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WHO ARE COVERED BY

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
PRIVATE INSURANCE	62.2	449	58.7	173	61.7	622
GOVERNMENT PROGRAM	6.1	449	5.4	173	6.0	622

NONSOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME DENTISTS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL DENTISTS						
NO DENTISTS EMPLOYED	176	26.9	33	48.5	209	29.0
1 DENTIST EMPLOYED	303	46.5	24	35.7	328	45.5
2 DENTISTS EMPLOYED	83	12.8	7	9.7	90	12.5
3 DENTISTS EMPLOYED	35	5.4	2	2.6	37	5.1
4 OR MORE DENTISTS EMPLOYED	55	8.4	2	3.6	57	7.9
ALL	652	100.0	68	100.0	720	100.0

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PRACTICE EXPENSES

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
TOTAL PRACTICE EXPENSES	264567	356	302575	138	270898	494
TOTAL PRACTICE EXPENSES PER DENTIST	91309	356	114819	138	95225	494
WAGES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES	34.4	335	36.2	132	34.7	467
LABORATORY CHARGES AS A PERCENT OF EXPENSES	17.2	338	3.1	120	15.0	458
DENTAL SUPPLIES AS A PERCENT OF EXPENSES	10.3	326	14.1	127	10.9	453

NONSOLO DENTISTS
PRACTICE MEAN GROSS INCOMES

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
PRACTICE GROSS INCOME	441948	384	555829	149	460932	533
GROSS INCOME PER DENTIST	143009	384	205300	149	153393	533
GROSS INCOME PER PRACTICE HOUR	$90.30	384	$127.51	149	$96.50	533
GROSS PER HOUR PER DENTIST	$36.23	384	$52.58	149	$38.95	533
GROSS PER VISIT	$82.39	229	$90.10	94	$83.73	323
GROSS PER VISIT PER DENTIST	$32.11	229	$35.12	94	$32.64	323

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN NUMBER OF PATIENT VISITS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL - WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
PATIENT VISITS PER WEEK (-HYG VISITS)	58.6	472	94.4	176	64.4	648
PATIENT VISITS PER WEEK (+HYG VISITS)	73.7	451	100.3	172	78.1	623
PATIENT VISITS PER YEAR (-HYG VISITS)	2788.2	472	4444.7	176	3055.3	648
PATIENT VISITS PER YEAR (+HYG VISITS)	3504.6	451	4719.5	172	3704.3	623
PATIENTS TREATED PER HOUR	1.6	472	2.6	176	1.8	648

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN WEEKS AND HOURS SPENT IN THE PRACTICE

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
WEEKS PRACTICING IN THE OFFICE	47.2	501	46.8	196	47.2	697
HOURS PER WEEK IN THE OFFICE	42.2	501	41.7	196	42.1	697
HOURS PER WEEK TREATING PATIENTS	33.1	501	31.5	196	32.9	697

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN AND MEDIAN AGE BY GENDER AND DENTIST TYPE

	TYPE OF DENTIST											
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER				SPECIALIST				ALL-WEIGHTED			
	AGE				AGE				AGE			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	GENDER PERCENT	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	GENDER PERCENT	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	GENDER PERCENT	NUMBER
GENDER												
MALE	44.7	42	95.3	468	48.5	47	97.4	191	45.4	43	95.3	659
FEMALE	32.8	32	4.7	23	47.8	50	2.6	5	34.3	34	4.1	28
ALL	44.1	41	100.0	491	48.5	47	100.0	196	44.9	43	100.0	687

NONSOLO DENTISTS
MEAN AND MEDIAN GRADUATION YEAR

	TYPE OF DENTIST								
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER			SPECIALIST			ALL-WEIGHTED		
	MEAN	MEDIAN	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	NUMBER
GRADUATION YEAR	68.7	72	501	63.7	65	196	67.8	69	697

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

Solo Dentists

Three-quarters (75.7%) of all solo dentists are sole prorprietors. Among solo general practitioners and specialists, 77.8% and 50.6% are sole proprietors, respectively. In contrast, 24.3% of all solo dentists are shareholders in an incorporated practice. Among solo general practitioners and specialists, 22.2% and 49.4% are shareholders in an incorporated practice, respectively.

The majority (51.4%) of patients seen by all solo dentists had annual family incomes between $10,000 and $29,999. Solo general practitioners estimated that an average of 37.7% of their patients had family incomes in this range, with specialists reported an average of 47.3%.

Approximately 58.2% of the patients seen by all solo dentists were covered by private insurance programs. The percentages were fairly constant across solo general practitoners and specialists.

All solo dentists had an average of 62.5 patient visits per week (excluding hygienist visits). Solo specialists had a substantially greater average number, 98.3, whereas solo general practitioners reported an average of 57.0.

All solo dentists treated an average of 1.7 patients per hour. Solo specialists reported a slightly higher average, 2.8 patients per hour, with solo general practitioners reporting and average of 1.6.

More than half (52.6%) of all solo dentists employ 4 or more employees. The percentage declines slightly to 49.6% for solo general practitioners but jumps to 69.5% for solo specialists.

All solo dentists earned an average net income of $65,756 from private practice. Solo general practitioners reported an average of $60,629, while solo specialists reported a significantly higher average of $98,811.

Solo Dentists (continued)

All solo dentists earned an average of 1.1% of their total (net income from practice plus income from other dental sources) from other dental sources. The percentages were fairly constant across solo general practitioners and specialists.

Approximately half (48.9%) of all solo dentists' gross income was paid by direct patient payment. Government programs comprised 4.6%, and private insurance payments comprised 45.8% of gross income received.

Total practice expenses for all solo dentists averaged $106,080. Of this, 31.3% was accounted for by wage payments, 17.6% by laboratory charges, and 11.0% by purchases of dental supplies. Total practice expenses averaged $100,423 for solo general practitioners and $143,618 for specialists.

All solo dentists reported an average annual gross income of $179,833. Gross income for solo specialists was substantially higher, $249,715, and lower for solo general practitioners, $169,043.

SOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME PERSONNEL

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:						
NO EMPLOYEES	66	3.9	8	7.5	58	4.0
1 EMPLOYEE	160	9.5	15	7.3	170	8.6
2 EMPLOYEES	299	17.7	71	19.7	340	18.5
3 EMPLOYEES	427	24.6	49	14.2	399	18.9
4 OR MORE EMPLOYEES	837	49.6	212	48.5	1049	52.6
ALL	1690	100.0	109	100.0	1994	100.0

SOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME ASSISTANTS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
FULL- OR PART-TIME ASSISTANTS						
NO ASSISTANTS	198	11.8	13	4.2	231	11.5
1 ASSISTANT	791	46.1	74	25.7	864	43.2
2 ASSISTANTS	436	26.8	74	25.2	535	26.6
3 ASSISTANTS	258	9.2	63	19.4	216	11.7
4 OR MORE ASSISTANTS	114	6.7	78	25.3	192	9.6
ALL	1705	100.0	309	100.0	2019	100.0

SOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING FULL- OR PART-TIME HYGIENISTS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
NUMBER OF HYGIENISTS						
NO HYGIENISTS	454	38.5	24	74.6	697	68.0
1 HYGIENIST	662	47.7	39	12.7	692	71.9
2 HYGIENISTS	274	16.5	18	5.7	291	18.3
3 HYGIENISTS	66	5.2	8	2.1	67	6.7
4 OR MORE HYGIENISTS	44	2.7	17	4.2	53	3.1
ALL	1794	100.0	911	100.0	1914	100.0

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1984 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

SOLO DENTISTS
NET INCOME FROM PRIVATE PRACTICE AND OTHER DENTAL SOURCES

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL - WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	N
NET INCOME FROM PRIVATE PRACTICE	$60,629	974	$98,811	231	$65,756	1241
NET INCOME FROM ALL DENTAL SOURCES	$61,145	973	$100,979	232	$66,483	1241

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF GROSS INCOME PAID BY

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL - WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	N
DIRECT PATIENT PAYMENT	47.1	931	59.6	295	48.9	1226
GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS	4.7	931	4.1	295	4.6	1226
PRIVATE INSURANCE	47.4	931	35.7	295	46.9	1226

SOLO DENTISTS
PERCENT OF DENTISTS CURRENTLY PRACTICING AS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED		WEIGHTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT						
SOLE PROPRIETOR	1149	77.8	60	50.9	1140	73.7
SHAREHOLDER, INCORPORATED	319	22.2	59	49.4	378	24.3
ALL	1438	100.0	119	100.0	1547	100.0

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1991 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WHO ARE

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
LESS THAN 15 YEARS	18.0	1350	43.3	326	21.5	1676
15-65 YEARS	65.4	1060	48.2	326	63.0	1376
65 AND OLDER	16.6	1050	9.5	326	15.5	1376

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WITH ESTIMATED INCOME OF

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
UNDER $10,000	10.3	972	6.6	293	9.8	1265
$10,000-29,999	52.3	972	46.1	293	51.4	1265
$30,000 PLUS	37.7	972	47.3	293	38.3	1265

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WHO ARE COVERED BY

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
PRIVATE INSURANCE	56.6	1011	55.7	301	56.2	1312
GOVERNMENT PROGRAM	5.0	1011	5.7	301	5.1	1312

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1994 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN PRACTICE EXPENSES

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
TOTAL PRACTICE EXPENSES	100423	934	143618	273	106080	1207
TOTAL PRACTICE EXPENSES PER DENTIST	100423	934	143618	273	106080	1207
WAGES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES	30.8	903	34.8	267	31.3	1170
LABORATORY CHARGES AS A PERCENT OF EXPENSES	19.3	907	5.4	249	17.6	1156
DENTAL SUPPLIES AS A PERCENT OF EXPENSES	10.6	899	13.6	262	11.0	1161

SOLO DENTISTS
PRACTICE MEAN GROSS INCOMES

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
PRACTICE GROSS INCOME	169043	935	249715	280	179833	1215
GROSS INCOME PER DENTIST	169043	935	249715	280	179833	1215
GROSS INCOME PER PRACTICE HOUR	$127.84	935	$156.85	280	$131.72	1215
GROSS PER HOUR PER DENTIST	$127.84	935	$156.85	280	$131.72	1215
GROSS PER VISIT	$86.87	896	$75.34	260	$85.37	1156
GROSS PER VISIT PER DENTIST	$86.87	896	$75.34	260	$85.37	1156

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN NUMBER OF PATIENT VISITS

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL - WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
PATIENT VISITS PER WEEK (-HYG VISITS)	57.0	1052	98.3	314	62.5	1366
PATIENT VISITS PER WEEK (+HYG VISITS)	74.1	1033	103.8	305	78.0	1338
PATIENT VISITS PER YEAR (-HYG VISITS)	2722.2	1052	4547.5	314	2965.6	1366
PATIENT VISITS PER YEAR (+HYG VISITS)	3532.0	1033	4793.8	305	3698.7	1338
PATIENTS TREATED PER HOUR	1.6	1052	2.8	314	1.7	1366

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN WEEKS AND HOURS SPENT IN THE PRACTICE

	TYPE OF DENTIST					
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER		SPECIALIST		ALL-WEIGHTED	
	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER
WEEKS PRACTICING IN THE OFFICE	47.5	1105	46.5	344	47.4	1449
HOURS PER WEEK IN THE OFFICE	42.6	1105	41.5	344	42.5	1449
HOURS PER WEEK TREATING PATIENTS	33.1	1105	31.3	344	32.8	1449

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN AND MEDIAN AGE BY GENDER AND DENTIST TYPE

	TYPE OF DENTIST											
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER				SPECIALIST				ALL-WEIGHTED			
	AGE				AGE				AGE			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	GENDER PERCENT	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	GENDER PERCENT	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	GENDER PERCENT	NUMBER
GENDER												
MALE	47.5	46	98.0	1065	48.3	47	98.0	337	47.6	46	98.0	1402
FEMALE	37.4	36	2.0	22	42.7	37	2.0	7	38.1	37	2.0	29
ALL	47.3	45	100.0	1087	48.2	46.5	100.0	344	47.4	46	100.0	1431

SOLO DENTISTS
MEAN AND MEDIAN GRADUATION YEAR

	TYPE OF DENTIST								
	GENERAL PRACTITIONER			SPECIALIST			ALL-WEIGHTED		
	MEAN	MEDIAN	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN	NUMBER
GRADUATION YEAR	65.6	68	1105	63.9	65	344	65.4	67	1449

SOURCE: AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE.

Methodology and Definitions

INTRODUCTION

The 1986 Survey of Dental Practice (SDP) is a continuation of the series of surveys that have been conducted every two to three years since the early 1950's, annually since 1982, by the American Dental Association's Bureau of Economic and Behavioral Research. The purpose of the survey is to provide reliable information on selected characteristics of private practice in the United States.

The 1986 SDP consisted of detailed questions dealing with expenses of operating a private practice, net and gross income from the private practice of dentistry, the number of patient visits to the dentist, hours and weeks worked in the practice, occupational status and employment status, practice personnel mix, auxiliary employment and wages, and other selected characteristics.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 1986 SDP was a condensed version of the long-form 1985 SDP. This short-form of the survey was sent to 4% of the dentists who were known to be actively engaged in the private practice of dentistry.

Sampling

The population consisted of 129,039 dentists who, based on the 1982 Distribution of Dentists, were known to be in private practice, even if only part-time.

The Distribution of Dentists is a dental census that is conducted periodically by the American Dental Association. Although the 1982 Distribution is the most recent complete census, the sampling frame is updated periodically by adding information about recent graduates, retirement and deaths when available. Dentists with an unknown practice type were included in the sampling frame.

The sample was ordered by type of practice - general practitioner or specialist. Within each type, the sample was sorted by dental school and graduation year. A random sample from each type of practice was selected. Since specialists comprise a small percentage of the dental population it was necessary to oversample (i.e., the proportion of specialists sampled is higher than the actual percentage of specialists in the total population) to ensure adequate numbers for statistical analysis. It should be noted that the sample was drawn in such a way

as to be able to make statements about general practitioners and specialists as a whole. We may not have, for any given specialty, enough dentists responding to make reliable statements about that individual specialty.

Data Collection

The 1986 SDP was initially mailed in April, 1986. Two follow-up mailings to non-respondents occurred in May and June, 1986. Coding, hand-editing, and computer processing were completed by October, 1986. The final response rate was computed after the individuals who were either retired, disabled, deceased, not in private practice, or had unknown addresses were eliminated from the sample. The adjusted sample size was used to calculate the final response rate of 50.4%.

Weighting the Sample

Since the proportion of specialists in the sample is higher than the actual percentage in the dental population, it is necessary to account for this imbalance when making statements about the total dental population. The correction is accomplished by developing and applying a weighting factor to each sampled dentist.

Weights were calculated for general practitioners and specialists separately, by dividing the percentage of each in the population by the percentage in the sample. The assumed proportion of general practitioners in the population is 85%, specialists, 15%. The percentage of general practitoners in the sample is 74.5%, specialists, 25.5%.

The weights were computed as follows:

General Practitioner - .85/.745 = 1.140939

Specialist - .15/.255 = 0.588235

These weights were employed in the calculations of means and medians where general practitioners and specialists were combined - where statements were made about "all" independent or solo dentists.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of several terms and phrases are provided in this section to assist with the interpretation of data contained in the tables. In general, the dentists included in this report were working in private practice as a primary occupation. In addition, all dentists had started in their current (i.e., 1986) practice prior to 1985.

ALL DENTISTS: This group of dentists contains all dentists responding to the survey, including those who are employed by a dentist or dental practice.

DENTAL PRACTICE PERSONNEL (ALL STAFF): This group includes dental hygienists, chairside assistants, dental laboratory technicians, secretary/ receptionists, bookkeepers and other office personnel. Dentists employed by the practice are NOT included.

FULL-TIME and PART-TIME: For purposes of this report, full-time was defined as working in the practice at least 32 hours per week. Part-time was defined as working in the practice less than 32 hours per week.

HOURLY SALARY: The hourly salary reported is computed by dividing the weekly salary by the number of hours worked.

INDEPENDENT DENTISTS: All dentists who own or share in the ownership of a dental practice are independent dentists. This ownership status includes sole proprietorship, partnership and a shareholder in an incorporated practice.

MEAN: This is the simple average of values reported by the dentists responding to the survey. The mean is calculated by summing the values reported and then dividing the sum by the number of dentists reporting values.

MEAN PER YEAR: Several variables in the tables are reported as means per year (e.g., mean number of appointments per year). The per year figures were determined by multiplying the per week values reported by dentists, by the number of weeks worked in the office for the year.

NONOWNER DENTISTS (EMPLOYED): This group includes all dentists who work in a dental practice on a salary, commission, percentage or associate basis.

NONSOLO DENTISTS: Nonsolo dentists work in a dental practice with at least one other dentist. Some of these dentists may be employed by the owner dentists in the practice.

PATIENT NO-SHOWS: The total of patient no-shows was defined as the difference between the number of patient appointments and the number of scheduled visits. It was assumed that the number of scheduled visits were equal to or less than the number of patient appointments.

REGIONS: The following is a breakdown of the states in each region.

New England: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
Middle Atlantic: NJ, NY, PA
East North Central: IL, IN, MI, OH, WI
West North Central: EA, KS, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD
South Atlantic: DE, MD, DC, FL, GA, NC, SC, VA, WV
East South Central: AL, KY, MS, TN
West South Central: AR, LA, OD, TX
Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY
Pacific: AK, CA, HI, OR, WA

SCHEDULED VISITS: Scheduled visits are the patient appointments who were present in the office for treatment.

SOLO DENTISTS: All dentists who work in private practice with no other dentists are solos. A solo dentist is also a sole proprietor or the only shareholder in an incorporated practice.

TOTAL PATIENT VISITS: Total patient visits is the sum of walk-in visits, emergency visits, and scheduled visits.

WEIGHTING: Since specialists comprise a smaller percentage of the dental population, it was necessary to oversample them to insure adequate numbers for statistical analysis. The proportion of specialists in the sample is higher than the actual proportion of specialists in the total population of dentists. Please note that individual specialties were not oversampled, and, therefore, only statistics on specialists as a group are presented. Statistics computed for All Dentists were weighted to reflect national proportions.

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1986 SURVEY OF DENTAL PRACTICE

Please answer all questions by **circling** the number corresponding to the most appropriate response, except where a fill in the blank is requested.

1. Which of the following **best** describes your primary and/or secondary occupation(s) during 1985? Please circle **one** response for **EACH** column.)

	Primary Occupation	Secondary Occupation
a. Private practice (full- or part-time)	00	00
b. Dental school faculty/staff member	01	01
c. Armed Forces	02	02
d. Other federal services (e.g., VA, PHS)	03	03
e. State or local government employed	04	04
f. Hospital staff dentist	05	05
g. Intern/resident	06	06
h. Other student	07	07
i. Other health/dental organization staff member (e.g., NIDR)	08	08
j. Not in practice/retired	09	09
k. Occupation unrelated to dentistry	10	10
l. **NO SECONDARY OCCUPATION**	—	11

Please complete the remainder of this questionnaire if you were in **PRIVATE PRACTICE** during **ANY PART** of 1985 as:

1. a **PRIMARY** occupation, **OR**
2. a **SECONDARY** occupation, **OR**
3. both a **PRIMARY** and **SECONDARY** occupation.

If you were **NOT INVOLVED** in the **PRIVATE PRACTICE** of dentistry during any part of 1985 please **RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.** Thank you.

INDIVIDUAL DENTIST QUESTIONS

The following questions pertain to you as an individual private practitioner. If you changed practices (i.e., worked in more than one **PRIMARY** practice during 1985), please give information on the practice in which you treated patients for the greatest number of months.

2. Are you currently **ANNOUNCING** yourself and practicing as a specialist in an ADA recognized specialty area (dental public health, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral pathology, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, or prosthodontics)?

Yes 1
No 2

	Primary Practice	Secondary Practice
3. In what year did you **FIRST** become associated with the primary/secondary practice where you practiced during 1985?	19 ____	19 ____

4. Which **ONE** of the following **BEST** describes your employment status when you **FIRST** became associated with that practice?

	Primary Practice	Secondary Practice
a. Sole proprietor (i.e., the only owner) in an unincorporated dental practice	1	1
b. Partner in a complete or limited partnership	2	2
c. Shareholder in an incorporated dental practice	3	3
d. Employed by an incorporated dental practice on a salary, commission, percentage, or associate basis but not a shareholder	4	4
e. Employed by an unincorporated dental practice on a salary, commission, percentage, or associate basis	5	5
f. Independent contractor	6	6
g. Other, please specify ____		

5. Which **ONE** of the following **BEST** describes your employment status in that practice during 1985?

	Primary Practice	Secondary Practice
a. Sole proprietor (i.e., the only owner) in an unincorporated dental practice	1	1
b. Partner in a complete or limited partnership	2	2
c. Shareholder in an incorporated dental practice	3	3
d. Employed in an incorporated dental practice on a salary, commission, percentage, or associate basis but not a shareholder	4	4
e. Employed in an unincorporated dental practice on a salary, commission, percentage, or associate basis	5	5
f. Independent contractor	6	6
g. Other, please specify ____		

	Primary Practice	Secondary Practice
6. What was the zip code of your practice(s) during 1985?	____	____
	zip code	

7. Please indicate the following regarding patient care that **YOU PERSONALLY** provided during 1985?

	Primary Practice	Secondary Practice
The average number of:		
a. **APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED** per week (**EXCLUDING** those with hygienist appointments only)	appointments per week	
b. **WALK-IN VISITS** per week that **YOU** treated (i.e., non-emergency and no appointment scheduled.) (If none, enter zero.)	visits per week	
c. **EMERGENCY VISITS** per week that **YOU** treated (i.e., no appointment scheduled.) (If none, enter zero.)	visits per week	
d. **SCHEDULED VISITS** per week that **YOU ACTUALLY** treated (**EXCLUDING** those with hygienist appointments only	visits per week	

8. Please answer the following about the time **YOU PERSONALLY** spent in the practice(s) during 1985.

	Primary Practice	Secondary Practice
a. Total number of weeks worked (excluding vacation)	weeks	
b. Total number of **HOURS PER WEEK** spent in the practice	hours per week	
c. Number of hours per week spent **TREATING PATIENTS** in the practice	hours per week	

9. What was **YOUR** 1985 net income (after practice expenses and business taxes) from: (Please include salary, commission and/or dividends.)

	Net Income
a. Your primary practice	$ _____ .00
b. Your secondary practice (if applicable)	$ _____ .00
c. Other income from dentistry (i.e., teaching, research, other practice, etc.)	$ _____ .00

If you were in private practice as a **PRIMARY OCCUPATION** during 1985, please continue.

If you were **NOT** in private practice as a **PRIMARY OCCUPATION** during 1985, **DO NOT CONTINUE.** Please return the questionnaire. Thank you.

ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE CHARACTERISTICS

10. **INCLUDING YOURSELF**, please indicate the number of full- or part-time **DENTIST POSITIONS** in the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985. (If none, enter zero.)

	Number of Dentist Positions
a. Number of **OWNER** dentists (i.e., sole proprietor, partners, or shareholders)	
b. Number of **NON-OWNER** dentists (i.e., employed dentists, associates and non-shareholders) If none, enter zero	

11. Please indicate the number of full-time (32 hours per week or more) and part-time (less than 32 hours per week) **EMPLOYEE POSITIONS** in the **PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985. (If none, enter zero.)

	Number of Employee Positions	
	full-time	part-time
a. Dental hygienist(s)		
b. Chairside assistant(s)		
c. Secretary/receptionist(s)*		
d. Dental laboratory technician(s)		
e. Bookkeeper, business personnel		
f. Other, please specify _____		

***NOTE:** A secretary or receptionist who also provides chairside assistance at least 50% of the time should be counted as a chairside assistant.

If the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** employed any dental hygienists in 1985, please continue. If **no** hygienists were employed, skip to question 16.

12. Please provide the following regarding all dental hygienist(s) appointments and visits in the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985:

	Dental Hygienist(s)
The average number of:	
a. **APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED** per week primarily for hygienist(s) treatment	appointments per week
b. **SCHEDULED VISITS** per week that were actually treated by all hygienist(s)	visits per week

13. Which of the following was the predominant method of reimbursing dental hygienist(s) in the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE**? (Circle one.)

a. Salary only 1
b. Commission only 2
c. Salary plus commission 3
d. Other, please specify _____

14. Do you consider dental hygienists to be an employee of your practice or an independent contractor? (Circle one.)

a. employee 1
b. independent contractor 2
c. Other, please specify _____

15. Please provide the following for **EACH DENTAL HYGIENIST** in the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985. If the practice did not employ someone in these positions, please check the appropriate box in the first column.

DENTAL HYGIENIST (S):	Not applicable (Please check boxes)	1985 ANNUAL Salary/ Commission (in dollars)	Weeks Worked in 1985	Hours Worked per Week	Length of Experience PRIOR to Employment in this Practice		Length of Employment in this Practice	
Position #1	☐	$ _____ per year	_____ weeks	_____ hours	_____ years	_____ months	_____ years	_____ months
Position #2	☐	$ _____ per year	_____ weeks	_____ hours	_____ years	_____ months	_____ years	_____ months
Position #3	☐	$ _____ per year	_____ weeks	_____ hours	_____ years	_____ months	_____ years	_____ months

16. Approximately what percentage of the patients who visited the primary practice

	Entire Practice Patient Characteristics
a. were	
14 years of age or younger	_____ %
15 to 64 years of age	_____ %
65 years of age or older	_____ %
	TOTAL 100 %
b. were members of families whose annual income is estimated to be	
under $10,000	_____ %
$10,000 to 29,999	_____ %
$30,000 or more	_____ %
	TOTAL 100 %
c. were:	
covered by a private insurance program that pays or partially pays for their dental care	_____ %
covered by a public assistance program that pays or partially pays for their dental care	_____ %
not covered by an insurance program	_____ %
	TOTAL 100 %
d. were members of a racial minority	_____ %

If you were a solo practitioner during 1985, please skip to question 18.

17. Please indicate the following regarding patient care by the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985:

The average number of:	Entire Practice
a. **APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED** per week (**EXCLUDING** those with hygienist appointments only)	_____ appointments per week
b. **WALK-IN VISITS** per week that were treated (i.e., non-emergency and no appointment scheduled) If none, enter zero	_____ visits per week
c. **EMERGENCY VISITS** per week (i.e., no appointment scheduled) If none, enter zero	_____ visits per week
d. **SCHEDULED VISITS** per week that were **ACTUALLY** treated (**EXCLUDING** those with hygienist appointments only)	_____ visits per week

18. In the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE**, what was the **total amount of fees charged** for the dental care provided during 1985 **(annual billing)**? $ _____ 00

19. What percentage of the **GROSS RECEIPTS** were received (If none, enter zero.)

	Gross Receipts
a. as direct patient payment	_____ %
b. as payment from government programs (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, or other public insurance)	_____ %
c. as direct payment from private insurance carriers	_____ %
d. from other sources of payment (Please specify) _____	_____ %
	TOTAL 100 %

20. During 1985, were any of the expenses of the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** (dental facilities or staff) shared with other dentists?

Yes 1
No 2

If you shared expenses (dental facilities or staff) with any other practice, please report **YOUR PRIMARY PRACTICE** expenses only.

21. For the following selected items, what were the **TOTAL PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES** for the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985? (If no expenses were incurred for specific items, please enter zero.)

	Expenses
a. Yearly rent	$ _____ 00
b. Yearly mortgage (including interest)	$ _____ 00
c. Total salaries, wages and commissions of non-dentists employees	$ _____ 00
d. Commercial dental laboratory charges	$ _____ 00
e. Dental supplies	$ _____ 00
f. Advertising expenses	$ _____ 00
g. Bad debts	$ _____ 00

22. What were the **TOTAL PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES** of operating the **ENTIRE PRIMARY PRACTICE** during 1985? $ _____ 00
(This figure should be greater than the sum of the figures in question 21.)

Thank you for your assistance in this important research project. Please return this questionnaire by folding and place tape as indicated. Drop it in the mail.